FOR RELEASE Exhibition No. 15

"THE TEMPTATION OF SAINT ANTHONY"
Circulated by The American Federation of Arts
Through the courtesy of Loew-Lewin Productions.

"The Temptation of St. Anthony," an exhibition of oil paintings by American and European artists, painted for the Bel Ami International Competition of Loew-Lewin Productions, and circulated by The American Federation of Arts, will be shown at _____ from _____ to _____.
The exhibition will be open to the public weekdays from _____a.m. to _____ p.m.

"The Temptation of St. Anthony" is perhaps the most provocative exhibition of approximately fifty shows on the Federation's circuit this season. The centuries-old theme was interpreted by contemporary surrealists in response to an invitation from Loew-Lewin, whose objective was to endeavor to obtain an outstanding painting of the subject, to be used in their motion picture of "Bel Ami or The History of a Scoundrel" adapted from de Maupassant's novel of that title, and scheduled for release the end of 1946. The sum of $3,000 was offered as a prize for the painting selected for use in the film; and $500 was offered to each of the other contestants. All of the artists retain ownership of their paintings.

A distinguished jury composed of Marcel Duchamp, a pioneer modernist; Alfred H. Barr, Jr., museum director and author; and Sidney Janis, also an authority on modern art, selected Max Ernst's version of "The Temptation of St. Anthony" to be reproduced in Technicolor in the motion picture. That the decision and award were difficult, will be obvious to everyone who sees the exhibition. Indeed, many visitors will undoubtedly disagree with the jury's verdict, so admirable are some of the other artists' interpretations. It will be obvious to everyone, however, that the clean, bright colors of Mr. Ernst's painting are particularly well adapted to reproduction in the film.

Mr. Ernst visualized St. Anthony as a soul-sick man, delirious with his obsessions, which have been externalized in symbolic forms of hideous and revolting aspects. A pioneer surrealist, Mr. Ernst nevertheless calls to mind in this painting, works by such mediaeval artists as Hieronymus Bosch and Peter Huys.

Ivan Le Lorraine Albright of Chicago, whose "Picture of Dorian Gray" was the focal point in the Loew-Lewin motion picture of that novel in 1945, has made St. Anthony part of a mosaic of writhing, repellant forms of women, monsters and decay, executed with such objectivity as to have a three-dimensional appearance, in a sombre color scheme with irridescent flashes.

Russian-born Eugene Berman's version is perhaps the most baffling of all: a still life of scaly, encrusted and bubbling forms, rising like a fountain of putrefaction. Abraham Rattner's interpretation is the most remote and spiritual. The late Horace Pippin produced an uncluttered canvas of primitive character, with a touchingly youthful effect.

Interpretations by Paul Delvaux, Louis Guglielmi and Dorothea Tanning, while they differ markedly from one another, nevertheless have a basis which will be most intelligible and obvious to the majority of observers. M. Delvaux expressed it most succinctly by saying, "to me it has seemed that woman alone sufficed to torment poor St. Anthony." Consequently, his painting depicts three beautiful nude figures in the foreground of a dream-like setting of panelled walls, a dark and empty vista stretching to a rocky eminence, with the kneeling saint in the middle distance. Mr.

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Guglielmi's painting, admirable in color, has the strange immediacy of a dream, in which the concept of the temptress is symbolic rather than realistic. Miss Tanning's "St. Anthony" is tormented by the desires and visions in his own mind, taking shape in the billowing folds of his robe.

Salvador Dali's interpretation is one of the finest, in execution as well as conception. Most of us applaud his embodiment of the saint as a man actively combatting his tribulations, by thrusting forward the Cross to exorcise the fantastic procession of temptations across the desert.

As a group, these paintings are extraordinarily interesting and masterful, and one may hope some of them at least, will find permanent homes in public collections.

-- Florence S. Berryman
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